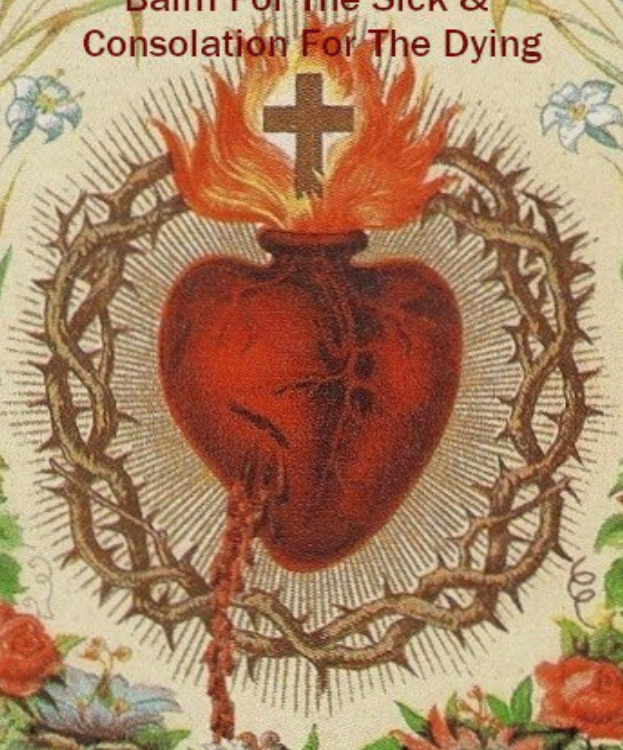
The Precious Blood

Balm For The Sick & Consolation For The Dying



Taken From The Glories Of The Precious Blood

By

Rev. Max F. Walz C.PP.S.

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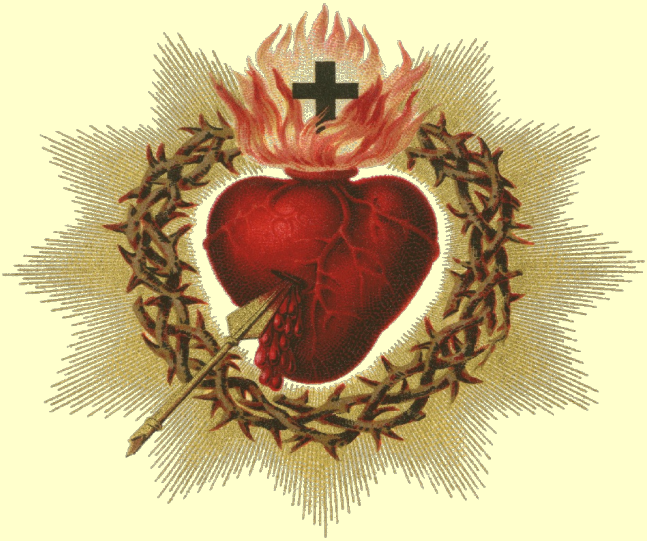

Balm For the Sick And Consolation For the Dying

TAKEN FROM

THE GLORIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

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PAIN, as beautifully described by Pére Laurent, not only respects the past, that is, it is not only expiatory in character, but it is one of the finest signs of God's mindfulness for us in the present, as well as for the future. We are afflicted that we may be saved, and the hand that wounds is also the hand that heals. Through suffering, new spiritual life is borne from this partial destruction of our being. God allows jealous rivalries, cruel disappointments, unexpected humiliations, to accomplish this aim; here He shatters a fortune, there He humbles a pride; dissipates this man's dreams for the future, strikes that man in his affections; maybe for another all earthly happiness will be swallowed up at a blow.

In all this lies the mission of pain---to bring God nearer to us and to raise us up to God. It detaches us from this wicked world and our sinful habits. Our sufferings ascend to

Heaven like sweet incense, even as a log is raised to the skies by applying fire to it and letting it go up in flame and smoke.

Pain is a grace which sanctifies the soul; through it, a sort of mystic union is effected which unites the life of the suffering soul to the very life of the suffering God-Man, and in this contact of the soul with God, pain is transmuted into power of redemption. Those who are patient and resigned to the will of God, acquire a likeness to their Divine Master, assuming the lineaments of the Crucified, especially if their sufferings be, in a measure, undeserved. They are identified with Jesus Christ, as victims of His special love, offered in expiation for the sins of this wicked world, and as such, they become a part of the vast scheme of atonement.

"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission," says St. Paul. It matters little whether it be the blood of bodily wounds or tears, which are the blood of the soul. "The

good God," says the Curé of Ars, "asks not for the martyrdom of our bodies, but for the martyrdom of our hearts and wills." There is an apostolate of suffering, as well as an apostolate of prayer and labor. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son." (Rom. 8:29). Jesus Christ continues to make reparation through those whose mission it is to suffer with Him for this sin-sick world. This is what St. Paul meant when, persecuted like his Master, he said of himself, "I fill up these things what are wanting of the sufferings of Christ."

What a consoling truth this should be for the sick, especially for nervous persons who feel like outcasts from human society, and frequently consider themselves abandoned even by God. Their past sins, and even their smaller faults, weigh heavily upon them. They imagine that God has forsaken them on account of their mistakes in life, and their offenses against Him, and they feel that

neither in this life nor in the next can they receive forgiveness or attain happiness.

Look up to the Cross, despondent souls, you who share in the bitter abandonment of your dying Saviour, and listen to the words of the Beloved Disciple, "He has loved us and washed us in His Blood," and He loves us now; as much as He did then.

"Oh sweetest Blood, that can implore
Pardon of God, and heaven restore,
The heaven which sin has lost,
While Abel's blood for vengeance pleads,
What Jesus shed still intercedes
For those who wrong Him most."

For neurotic persons, at a certain stage in their despondency, the future has naught in store but gloom and despair. "And I wept much," writes St. John of what he saw as a pilgrim in Heaven, "because no man was found worthy to open the book nor to see it." To this book,

by which is meant the history of the fall and redemption of mankind, the future of our own lives may be compared; it is a sealed book to us, and a most perplexing riddle, full of anxieties and fearful uncertainties, especially for the nerve-racked. "And one of the ancients said to me:" continues St. John, "weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and loose the seven seals thereof. And I saw ... a lamb standing as it were slain ... and he came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. And when he had opened the book ... they sung a new canticle, saying: 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God, in Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.'" (Apoc. 5:4-10).

Therefore, weep not, dear despondent soul! The Lamb that was slain, but rose again on the third day, as the Lion of the tribe of Juda, will lead you safely through your labyrinth of gloom and despair, if you will but cling to Him by the virtue of hope. The Lamb that was slain becomes the Lion of the tribe of Juda. "*Ideo victor quia victima*," says St. Augustine, "Christ is the victor because He became a victim."

St. Paul encourages us in these words: "In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed: we are straightened, but are not destitute: we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken: we are cast down, but we perish not. For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4:8)

Thus, from this seeming destruction of your being, you will emerge renewed in heart and character, your soul purified and sanctified, and worthy to sing a new canticle

of life. "These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Apoc. 7:14).

"For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Apoc. 7:17).

In the light of our future glory, our present tribulations should seem light and transient indeed!

We are on our way to life everlasting, to the land of the living, to *the* world, to *the* life, to *the* light. The road thither leads us through long and dark tunnels, then again up steep paths covered with thorns and thistles; our present infirmities will serve but to shorten the way. All Heaven is awaiting us at the other end.

The Blood of Christ is truly a balm for the sick, and a consolation for the dying. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction is the channel through when the Precious Blood is conveyed to the sick, during their last moments, by means of the application of the holy oils to the wounds of body and soul.

The devotion to the Blood of Jesus has the wonderful distinction of dispelling the fear of death, and the dread of meeting our Judge. "Having, therefore, a confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ." (Heb.10:19).

"The Blood of our Lord, wherever it is found, must produce great confidence in God; confidence in God is its primary and principal effect. Not only does it give us confidence through the belief that we have been bought at so great a price, but it gives confidence by a kind of heredity, a psychological transformation in the spirit that receives it. We become spiritually, supernaturally

sanguine. We expect everything from God, precisely because we have in our veins that precious blood that makes the heart of the Son of God throb with unlimited confidence in the goodness of the Father."---Vonier.

"The Blood of Jesus Christ," says St. Bernard, "speaks with trumpet tones, not of the judgments of God, but of His mercies." The great St. Thomas Aquinas calls the Precious Blood the key to the heavenly Paradise. How consoling are the words of St. John Chrysostom: "This Blood has the power to drive away the evil spirits and to draw to our side the Good Angel, aye, the King of Angels, and to blazon the way to Heaven." Ah! how well the Saints knew the wonderful power of the Blood of the God-Man! "O Blood of Jesus, shed for love of me," exclaimed St. Francis Carraccioli at the hour of death, "Thou belongest to me. I ask it of Thee, O Lord! Thou canst not refuse it to me, because it is mine." Then he devoutly kissed the five wounds of the Crucified and repeated again and again:

"Blood of my Jesus, Thou art mine and only with Thee and through Thee I hope to be saved."

Thou, too, discouraged soul, art stretched upon a cross of pain, twixt earth and Heaven; being above the earth, its comforts and vain hopes can give thee no relief; and since thou art yet fastened to the earth, Heaven and its consolations are far from thee. Look up to the Cross of Christ, despondent soul---nay, happy soul, that sharest the bitter abandonment of thy dying Saviour. For thy sake, His cry of agony, "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" is piercing the very heavens. Courage, sad heart, thy God has not forsaken thee. The Beloved Disciple says:

"And I heard a loud voice in Heaven saying: 'Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb,'" (Apoc. 12:10-11)

You, who sometime were afar off, were made nigh by the Blood of Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism. Your soul, stained by sin, was time and again washed by the Sacrament of Penance. In Holy Communion you were brought still nearer to Jesus. You entered into the closest relationship with Our Lord so that His Divine life pulsated in yours. In Confirmation your soul received the impression of an indelible seal which marked you as the property of God. In how many Masses was your soul sprinkled with the Precious Blood of your Redeemer! And now in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction and in the plenary indulgence for the hour of death the Precious Blood achieves its final triumph here on earth so that you may appear with the robe of royalty before your Judge.

In the words of the *Dies Irae* you may well exclaim:

Faint and weary Thou has sought me,
On the Cross of suffering bought me;
Shall such grace in vain be brought me?
Thou Who didst the robber hear,
Biddest me with hope draw near.
Yes, bid me come to Thee above,
With Thy Saints to sing Thy love.

Now you are prepared to join the Saints, now you are entitled to sing; and the echo from your death-chamber will be: With Thy Saints to win Thy love. From Heaven the words of St. John fall like a gentle dew upon your grave: "Blessed are they that wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb!"

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